
Report on upcoming changes in
Metro's Accessible Services Program

Important change in advance-registration procedures

Since October 2002, **Access** Transportation has been able to schedule all trips requested by riders within our scheduled service area and hours. ***However, one of every five of those trips is later cancelled by the rider.*** This reduces our ability to schedule the best possible rides for other callers and causes extra work for call center staff and drivers. A great many of the cancelled trips are requested four to seven days in advance, when the rider's plans may not yet be confirmed.

Therefore, starting January 1, 2005, the farthest ahead that riders can request trips will be three days (see chart, below). This will help us provide better customer service and allow us to use our resources more effectively and efficiently. Since we are now meeting all trip requests, you can be confident that under this new system you will be getting the ride you want.

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Access also would like to point out another of our services: if you regularly take the same trip, consider asking for “subscription service,.” Under this service, regular trips can be automatically scheduled, so you only have to call **Access** when you will NOT be taking the trip. If you would like to “subscribe” to a ride, please let your reservation taker know, and Access will set up your service. And please note:

- not all requests meet our criteria for subscription service; and
- subscription requests may take up to 30 days to process; during that time you can request rides individually.

One more thing: If you are “conditionally eligible” for **Access**, those conditions will be considered when any request for **Access** service is evaluated. If we determine that you can use standard bus service for the requested ride, you cannot use **Access** for that particular trip.

Come to a Public Meeting

Metro Transit will hold meetings in December to discuss your questions about upcoming and recent changes to Metro services.

To request a sign language interpreter or meeting materials in large print or Braille, call 206-263-3113 (voice) or 206-263-3116 (TTY) at least one week before the meeting.

Friday, December 3

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

King Street Center

201 S. Jackson, Seattle

Monday, December 6

6 - 7:30 p.m.

King Street Center

201 S. Jackson, Seattle

If you are using Transit, traveling via:

1st Ave.: routes 15, 18, 21, 22, or 56

2nd Avenue Ext: routes 17, 23, 24, 26, 28, 39, 42, 131, 132, 174, 414, 510, 511, 522, 554, or 594

3rd Ave.: routes 1, 7, 14, 36, or 70.

4th Ave.: routes 23, 39, 42, 131, 132, 134, or 594

Downtown Bus Tunnel: routes 41, 71, 72, 73, 101, 106, 150, 194, 255, or 550



Your Access Reservation Guide

If you call on: You can get a ride on these days...

Monday

Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday

Tuesday

Wednesday, Thursday or Friday

Wednesday

Thursday, Friday or Saturday

Thursday

Friday, Saturday or Sunday

Friday

Saturday, Sunday or Monday

Saturday

Sunday, Monday or Tuesday

Sunday

Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday

Call 205-5000 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon-Sun

A letter from the Accessible Service Advisory Committee

Money is tight, government is reducing services, and many people want to roll back even more taxes. We may not like that, but it is some of the reality of the times. For us, the members of the Accessible Services Advisory Committee, meeting the transportation needs of seniors and people with disabilities is critical, and has to be done even in tough budget times. We have to make sure that customer service is not lost for the sake of efficiencies.

But we realize that not all transportation needs can be met by Metro Transit or by Access. So over the past two years, the Accessible Services Advisory Committee has worked on an intensive process with community organizations and agencies to look for innovative approaches to meet the range of transportation needs facing seniors and people with disabilities. We convened two summits where over 150 people brainstormed the needs and innovative solutions. We

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convened a task force that met over six months and came up with ten key recommendations. We got the support of nearly 20 organizations and agencies for these recommendations and brought the recommendations to King County Executive Ron Sims and the King County Council, and got their commitment as well.

Over the past two years, we focused at our meetings on these key recommendations. Here are some of the things we did:

- worked to see that the needs assessment and resource survey got underway;
- supported partnerships with community agencies;
- sent a letter of support for the mobile data terminals; and
- made suggestions on the contract language for Access drivers to ensure customer-friendly service.

You can see a list of the task force recommendations and Metro Transit's progress to date at right. We want to thank King County Executive Ron Sims, the Regional Transit Committee of the King County Council, and Metro staff for all their work to make this progress.

We, as a committee of people with disabilities, will not forget these recommendations.

We will continue to push for coordinated planning so that transportation is part of the whole picture when government

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and non-profits are planning jobs, recreation, medical services, housing, and employment. We will continue to make sure that improvements in technology lead to customer-friendly service. We will continue, as riders and users of the system, to do all we can to bring the rider's point of view to the table.

Leo Finnegan, chair
Accessible Services Advisory Committee

Mark Adreon, vice chair
Accessible Services Advisory Committee

For more information about the committee, check out our website at
www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/getinvolved/asac

ASAC Task Force Recommendations

1. Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of people requiring specialized transportation in King County, and a resources survey of transportation options currently serving seniors and people with disabilities. If warranted by the assessment's findings, change county policy to expand the ADA *ACCESS* service area to better serve people who, because of a disability, cannot use the regular, non-commuter fixed route service some or all the time.

Metro Transit in partnership with Sound Transit is now conducting a countywide needs assessment and resource survey.

2. Implement the Mobile Data Terminal and Interactive Voice Response systems regionally, including sharing eligibility information among agencies and service providers.

Metro Transit has successfully implemented this technology.

3. Make *ACCESS* transportation a higher priority in the implementation of the Smart Card in King County.

***ACCESS* transportation is scheduled for Phase II of Smart Card implementation.**

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4. Improve customer service and increase the program's efficiency by grouping rides. Use technology to help service providers coordinate rides.

Metro Transit has used new technology to improve ride grouping and coordination.

5. Enable customers to book and cancel trips over the Internet by providing online scheduling 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Metro Transit will begin telephone keypad booking of some trips by the end of this year, and is seeking funding for online booking.

6. Improve customer service and increase efficiency through partnerships with the private and non-profit sectors.

Metro Transit has expanded the Community Partnership Program so that there are now 21 agencies with 45 vehicles, 2 special use vanpools.

7. Develop more effective ways to consistently integrate transportation, housing and human services in policy planning and program implementation in King County, with significant consideration given to the interests and needs of people with disabilities and seniors.

King County has included transportation goals in their Human Service Recommendations and Metro Transit continues to work with other area agencies to encourage coordinated efforts.

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8. Educate and enhance the awareness of elected officials and the public to the mobility interests and needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

Metro Transit participated in the Key Partners in Transportation and the United We Ride and has provided information to elected officials throughout the region on transportation for seniors and people with disabilities.

9. Improve communications and customer service for users of specialized transportation by focusing additional resources and program development on the drivers.

ASAC worked with Metro Transit on specific changes to driver training which would improve customer service.

10. Improve communications for customers by creating a single point of entry for information, trip requests, and service delivery using multiple tools.

Metro Transit is working on this as a long-term goal, with first steps being innovations such as Find-a-Ride and coordination with other transportation providers.

Access Transportation Holiday Service Levels – 2004 and 2005

- Access fares are always weekday.
- The Access call center (206-205-5000 or 206-749-4286 for TTY users) will be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. After hours, you can use the automated Rideline system to confirm or cancel rides.
- The Access service area varies based on the amount of regular Metro non-commuter fixed route bus service operated on weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays. On major holidays, Metro buses are usually on a Sunday schedule, with fewer routes and shorter hours. The list below indicates the Access service area for each holiday.
- Except for dialysis and life-sustaining medical trips, all subscription service is cancelled on the holidays noted below. If you still need your subscription ride, or if you need a different ride, contact the call center by 5 p.m. the day before the holiday to see if your ride falls within the service area and can be scheduled. Please note that Adverse Weather conditions may affect our ability to provide service during winter months.

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2004

Holiday	Date	Schedule	Subscription Service
Veterans Day	Nov. 11 Thursday	Weekday	NOT cancelled
Thanksgiving Day	Nov. 25 Thursday	Sunday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for Thanksgiving Day, contact the callcenter by 5 p.m. November 24th.
Day After Thanksgiving	Nov. 26 Friday	Weekday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for Friday, November 26th, contact the callcenter by 5 p.m. November 25th.
Christmas (observed)	Dec. 24 Friday	Weekday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for Christmas eve, contact the callcenter by 5 p.m. December 23rd.
Christmas Day	Dec. 25 Saturday	Sunday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for Christmas Day, contact the callcenter by 5 p.m. December 24th.
New Year's Day (observed)	Dec. 31 Friday	Weekday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for New Year's Eve, contact the callcenter by 5 p.m. December 30th.

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2005

Holiday	Date	Schedule	Subscription Service
New Year's Day	Jan. 1 Saturday	Sunday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for New Year's Day, contact the callcenter by 5 p.m. December 31st.
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Jan. 17 Monday	Weekday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, contact the callcenter by 5 p.m. January 16th.
Presidents Day	Feb. 21 Monday	Sunday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for Presidents' Day, contact the callcenter by 5 p.m. February 20th.
Memorial Day	May 30 Monday	Sunday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for Memorial Day, contact the callcenter by 5 p.m. May 29th.
Independence Day	July 4 Monday	Sunday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for Independence Day, contact the callcenter by 5 p.m. July 3rd.
Labor Day	Sept. 5 Monday	Sunday	Cancelled. If you still need your subscription ride for Labor Day, contact the callcenter at by 5 p.m. September 4th.

Connie Curham, Bus Travel Ambassador

Connie Curham first learned about King County Metro's bus travel training program when CARES of Washington, Metro's training contractor, presented a program for seniors who lunch at the Vashon Senior Center. Connie, retired from the travel business, admits to having fears of getting on the wrong bus or ferry. The training from CARES made all the difference for her, and allayed her fears.

Connie's group planned a bus trip using the Internet, bus schedules, and the Metro Rider Information phone line. They wanted to do as much as possible in one trip to downtown Seattle. From the Vashon Senior Center, they rode the bus to the ferry dock and walked onto the Seattle ferry. They visited waterfront stores, the Pike Place Market, and had lunch at Westlake Mall. They caught a Metro tunnel bus to Pioneer Square, then took the Waterfront Streetcar back to the ferry dock for their return to Vashon Island.

Soon after, Connie's family flew to Seattle for a visit. Using her new bus and ferry skills, Connie met them at the airport and brought them to her Vashon home. She also escorted them via Metro to the Downtown Seattle places she had visited earlier with her Senior Center friends.

Now Connie is volunteering time to organize monthly Metro bus trips for residents of her senior building. As Bobbi Beigh,

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Project Manager for CARES, says, “This is a good example of seniors on the move! I only hope I meet folks like Connie to travel with after I retire.”

Tell Us What You Think

We’d like to hear your thoughts about our upcoming switch to three-day advance reservations. Please email us at **Accessible.services@metrokc.gov** or write to us.

For more information

King County Metro's Accessible Services:

Phone: 206-263-3113

TTY: 206-263-3116

E-mail: accessible.services@metrokc.gov

Web site: <http://www.transit.metrokc.gov/kcdot/getinvolved/asac/>

Fax: (206) 263-3101

Mail: King County Metro Accessible Services
EXC-TR-1240

821 Second Ave., Suite 10
Seattle, WA 98104-1598

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206-684-1142

TTY Relay: 711

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